Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

Housing Services Corporation (HSC) is committed to making our services accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. This work includes ensuring we achieve our legislative duties and responsibilities and identify solutions and options that will allow us to deliver our services in a manner that respects those with disabilities.

Customer Service Policy Statement

1. Our Mission

Our mission is to raise the profile of social housing and promote its value as an asset to Ontario's neighbourhoods with vital links to individual well-being, community health and prosperity, economic growth and environmental sustainability.

2. Our Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, HSC strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

3. Providing goods and services to people with disabilities

HSC is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas :

3.1 Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

We will train staff who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

3.2 Telephone services

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

We will offer to communicate with customers by other means if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

3.3 Assistive Devices

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods and/or services.

We will also ensure that staff know how to use any available assistive devices on our premises.

4. Use of service animals and support persons

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public. We will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

Where a service animal is excluded from HSC premises by law, HSC will explain why the animal is excluded and will work with the person with a disability to identify and provide another reasonable measure that enables the person to obtain, use or benefit from HSC's goods, services or facilities.

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter HSC's offices and/or facilities where public meetings are being held with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while in our offices or facilities.

If HSC charges an admission fee in connection with a support person's presence at an event or function, HSC shall ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount, if any, that is payable in respect of the support person accompanying a person with a disability.

In certain cases, HSC might require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for the health or safety reasons of:

- the person with a disability
- others on the premises

Before making a decision, HSC will:

- consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs
- consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence
- determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises

If HSC determines that a support person is required, we will waive the admission fee or fare (if applicable) for the support person.

5. Notice of temporary disruption

If necessary, HSC will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used or required by people with disabilities. For example, this could be a last minute rescheduling of a public meeting from a facility with assistive devices such as a power door, to one that does not have such a device. In such situations, HSC will work to ensure notice is provided as soon as possible and will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration (if applicable) and a description of alternative measures.

6. Training for staff

HSC will provide training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- How to use HSC's assistive communication devices and other assistive devices;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing HSC's goods and services;
- HSC's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Applicable staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

7. Feedback process

The ultimate goal of HSC is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way HSC provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made via email, phone, and in writing. All written feedback will be directed to the HSC office:

Email: feedback@hscorp.ca

Phone: 416 594 9325 Toll Free: 1 866 268 4451

Address: Housing Services Corporation

20 Dundas Street West, Suite 1030, Toronto, Ontario M5G 2C2

Once received, the feedback will be assessed by HSC and directed (if required) to the appropriate staff member. We aim to acknowledge verbal and email enquiries within two business days, with the understanding that further follow-up may be required. Written enquiries will be acknowledged within 5 business days.

HSC will receive and respond to feedback, including complaints, about the manner in which it provides goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities and about the accessibility of this feedback process. Where a complaint is received, HSC will review the concern, identify any corrective or follow-up action that is appropriate, refer the matter to the responsible staff member, and communicate the outcome or next steps to the person who provided the feedback, where contact information has been provided.

HSC will make information about this feedback process readily available to the public. The feedback process will be accessible to persons with disabilities. Accessible formats and communication supports will be provided or arranged on request, in consultation with the person making the request. HSC will publicly notify customers that accessible feedback, accessible formats and communication supports are available on request.

8. Accessible formats and communication supports for documents

Where HSC is required under the Customer Service Standards to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, HSC will, on request, provide or arrange for the document or the information contained in it to be provided in an accessible format or with an appropriate communication support. HSC will provide the accessible format or communication support in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons. HSC will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the accessible format or communication support.

9. Modifications to this or other policies

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy

of HSC that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

10. Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, please contact HSC.